



Integrated Management Navigation System • Standard Accounting and Reporting System

# I-MANAGE STARS Communiqué



DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY STARS

March 2004

## Hot Topics

### ***STARS Training under Development***

The Project Team continues to develop training materials for the new Standard Accounting and Reporting System (STARS). Process documents prepared by subject matter experts from the Design, Configuration and Test (DCT) Team serve as the basis for the training. These process documents reflect the detailed accounting steps necessary to complete business processes in the new STARS system.

As process documents are finalized, DCT team members provide them to the Implementation Team for review and development of training materials. The Implementation Team takes an "end-user" perspective for developing the STARS training material. Both teams then evaluate the training materials to ensure they represent the way the Department conducts their business practices.

Once the development of training materials is complete, the Implementation Team will compile the information into manuals for hands-on classroom training. Materials will also be available through on-line help so end users can refer back to them for questions or refresher material. Training will be developed for each of the STARS modules (e.g. general ledger, accounts payable, accounts receivable, purchasing, fixed assets) as well as key sub-processes such as reimbursable work, work for others, and month-end and year-end closing activities. All training materials are scheduled for completion by late May. **Look for instructions for signing up for training on-line beginning in late June.**

### ***Highlights of Headquarters/Field Financial Management Meeting***

In February, DOE financial managers from Headquarters and the Field met to review financial services activities critical to meeting Departmental goals for FY04 and FY05. Discussions focused on four major Department-wide efforts:

- Accelerated financial statements
- Implementation of the Most Efficient Organization (MEO)
- Closeout of DISCAS and MARS
- Implementation of STARS

Senior Headquarters financial managers briefed the group on the individual plans for each of the four initiatives. Jim Campbell, Acting Director of the Office of Management and Budget Evaluation / Chief Financial Officer, proposed a high-level plan identifying and integrating the critical milestones for the four initiatives. Those present agreed that, given the interdependencies between these initiatives, a single plan would be very useful. The comprehensive, integrated plan will identify critical path items and key milestones, thus facilitating allocation of adequate resources required to execute the plan. "Our employees have been working hard to make the department successful in meeting its near-term financial management challenges. This new, integrated plan is the best way I know to ensure we understand all of the interdependencies and critical milestones, and allocate appropriate staff resources for their successful accomplishment," said Dean Olson, Director of Financial Policy and a presenter at the February meeting.

In addition, the attendees at the meeting acknowledged the importance of an adequate level of full time participation in the STARS project by federal accountants. In response to the need, the financial managers developed a new federal staffing model for the project. The intent is to provide a sufficient number of full time federal accounting staff on the project through implementation, including the crucial STARS User Acceptance Testing scheduled for May through July 2004.

Mr. Campbell concluded the meeting by advising the group he would brief his senior management on the outcomes of the meeting and provide them with an integrated plan.

## Monthly Spotlight: The STARS General Ledger

*Each month we highlight a new component of STARS or an upcoming activity that you may find interesting. This month, we spotlight new features in the STARS General Ledger. Wendy H. Miller (ME-12) leads the STARS General Ledger Team.*

The General Ledger is the core of the Department of Energy's financial records and constitutes the central "accounting books" of STARS. The STARS General Ledger provides the periodic (i.e. monthly) debit / credit general ledger account balances derived from detailed accounting transactions that occur in the various sub-ledger modules (e.g. Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, etc.) STARS will be the Department's accounting book of record beginning with FY2005.

The STARS General Ledger uses the US Standard General Ledger (SGL) instead of the Balance Sheet Codes (BSC) used in DISCAS. This means that the order of numerical balances that appear in the chart of accounts and the grouping of some transactions will be different. Despite the fact that reporting and grouping will be different, the General Ledger will still provide a record of accounting entries just as it has in the past. Implementation of the SGL will aid in many of the financial reports the Department must produce including SF 220.9 and SF 224 reports and FACTS I & II. The STARS General Ledger will also support standard federal reporting and funds control.

The STARS General Ledger has many new features that will benefit the Department of Energy. For example, there is a drill down capability that lets users click on any general ledger line item to immediately see more information about that entry including source system or sub-ledger information. The STARS General Ledger will also make it easier to collect and report information for the Federal Agencies Centralized Trial-Balance System (FACTS) for Treasury and will provide more flexibility in the Funds Available Inquiry by allowing users to customize the report filters.

Finally, accounting information from detailed journal entries generated by other modules will be posted in the STARS General Ledger to create an audit trail that will allow identification and analysis of discrepancies (e.g. double billing or an unrecorded payment) through our system. A well designed and maintained General Ledger will also help the Department of Energy to maintain clean audit opinions and respond promptly to GAO inquiries.

## Accounting Transition Plan

The closeout of DISCAS is part of an overall Accounting Transition Plan to ensure that accounting data transferred into I-MANAGE STARS is accurate, complete, and reliable. Headquarters and Field CFO staff continue to focus on resolving DISCAS data integrity issues and validating the accuracy of DISCAS general ledger balances for both the field office and the integrated contractors. This effort is critical to the success of the STARS implementation efforts. Due to the timing of data conversion testing in March 2004, it is imperative that each office focus their immediate attention on resolving DISCAS data integrity issues.

The January 2004 Accounting Transition Plan status reports varied from office to office in the amount of progress made against the plan's milestones. The Oak Ridge and Idaho Operations Offices reflected solid progress toward achieving the Plan's objectives while other offices across the complex committed to making significant progress against the data clean-up milestones in the months of February and March. Gary Beckner, at the Oak Ridge Financial Services Center, has developed several custom routines to facilitate identification of DISCAS data integrity issues. Please contact Gary at (865) 576-0904 if you are interested in receiving a copy of these programs. Questions concerning the Accounting Transition Plan may be addressed to [mary.lynch@hq.doe.gov](mailto:mary.lynch@hq.doe.gov) or (720) 962-7520.

## Moving Forward

### User Acceptance Testing to Validate the STARS Design

Employees from across DOE with functional backgrounds in accounting and finance will come together during STARS User Acceptance Testing to test the system's functionality. Approximately 24 employees will be brought on site in Germantown to participate in User Acceptance Testing. STARS User Acceptance Testing is scheduled to begin the first week of May and end in late July. The purpose of the User Acceptance Test is to verify that STARS accounting processes will adequately support the Department's business needs. There must be full participation of all staff designated to perform User Acceptance Testing at the Germantown facility. Interim results will be announced in the mid-June timeframe, and the final results of STARS User Acceptance Testing will be announced at the end of July.

## STARS Project Information

I-MANAGE Program Site: <http://www.mbc.doe.gov/ME2-5/i-manage/INDEX.HTM> 

I-MANAGE Program Manager, Chris Simpson: 202-586-4310 [christopher.simpson@hq.doe.gov](mailto:christopher.simpson@hq.doe.gov)

I-MANAGE Federal Project Executive, Warren Huffer: 301-903-3761 [warren.huffer@hq.doe.gov](mailto:warren.huffer@hq.doe.gov)

STARS Project Manager, Laura Kramer: 301-903-9932 [laura.kramer@hq.doe.gov](mailto:laura.kramer@hq.doe.gov)